

Investing for the future

Sheffield based fabricator and installer, Warwick Development, has recently taken delivery of a new Stuga ZX5. Glass Times editor, Luke Wood, talks to production manager, Steve Cardwell, to find out more about the investment.



Steve Cardwell

Luke Wood (LW): Can you give us a brief background on the company?

Steve Cardwell (SC): Warwick Development has over 23 years of experience within the industry, predominantly as a trade supplier. We have been a family run business for the last five years and we now also have a small fitting team who have completed over 250 installs in two years.

LW: What prompted the decision to invest in the Stuga ZX5? Was it to improve product quality or to increase volume in line with demand?

SC: It was predominantly quality led, to greatly improve the standard of products we manufacture. Alongside new Haffner welders and an Urban corner cleaner it has pushed us into another league in terms of the quality we can achieve.

However, along with this, we are now also seeking bigger contracts as we have more than doubled our current production capacity with the installation of the ZX5.

LW: Have you had Stuga machinery in the past?

SC: Yes, we had an Autoflow for nearly 15 years which has served us well but we are looking to enter a new chapter of our history now. We are constantly striving for improvement wherever and however we can.

“We are always looking to improve our production lines and to help our team to be more efficient and streamlined”

LW: Why did you choose the Stuga ZX5? Was it based on cost, or quality, or service?

SC: A combination of all three. The investment came close to £440,000 but we have a very good relationship with Stuga and they have looked after us for years.

We did look at other brands of machinery but ultimately, we came back to the Stuga ZX5 as it best suited our building floor space and design.

LW: Will the new Stuga be dedicated to one particular product line?

SC: It will cut all our PVC products (Eurocell and Spectus) which includes windows, doors, vertical sliders, patio and French doors and composite doors.

LW: What other machines do you have?

SC: We have a 22,000ft² factory that also includes a 5 head Haffner in-line welder, a 4 head Haffner in-line welder and an Urban SV530 corner cleaner.

LW: Have you made any other investments in machinery or production recently, or do you plan to?

SC: Yes, the welders which were

both purchased in the last 18 months were a combined investment of close to £120,000. We are always looking to improve our production lines and to help our team to be more efficient and streamlined.

LW: In the past, have you predominantly manufactured PVC or aluminium – or both?

SC: We have manufactured both PVC and aluminium for at least 10 years, but in the last two years our aluminium dept has flourished massively, to the point where we purchased additional factory space of around 15,000ft² next door to our PVC factory.

That has since increased from two staff to 14 staff and has overtaken the PVC department in terms of sales.

LW: Have you found demand has increased for higher value products, ie foils, flush and aluminium?

SC: Yes, massively in aluminium and the flush systems. As we make all foils and colours this has steadily risen over the years to roughly a 60/40 split in favour of white, whereas 10 years ago this would have been closer to a 90/10 split.

LW: A new machine like a Stuga ZX5 is a big investment – considering the current economic climate, you must be confident that you will have the business to support that investment going forward?

SC: Yes, we have several projects in the pipeline that will require greater capacity on the shopfloor, alongside working with much larger developers that have significant projects for us in the future.

This puts us on the map with much bigger fabricators competing for much bigger contracts. We have a fantastic team of fabricators and now we have a machine at the heart of our production that's capable of saving huge amounts of time, enabling our team to be way more productive.

